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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 HA-05 IO-13 ACDA-12 /108 W
----------078255 121320Z /45
R 120503Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4392
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13549

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR VN CH CB
SUBJECT: SWEDISH NEWS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHINESE IN VIETNAM;
LACK OF EVIDENCE OF ATROCITIES IN KAMPUCHEA

REF: PARIS 14885

1. I HAVE HAD SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH SWEDISH AMBASSADOR OBERG ON THE SUBJECT OF VIETNAM IN RECENT WEEKS, MOST RECENTLY MAY 11. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT SINO/VIETNAMESE RELATIONS ARE AT AN ALL TIME LOW, AND SAID THAT THEY HAD PASSED THE POINT OF NO RETURN. HE ADDED THAT SKIRMISHES BUT NOT BATTLES HAVE TAKEN PLACE ON THE FRONTIER AND THAT THE NUMBER OF CHINESE LEAVING VIETNAM, BOTH LEGALLY AND ILLEGALLY, IS VERY GREAT. HE SAID THAT THE SKIRMISHES ON THE FRONTIER HAVE NOT RPT NOT INVOLVED ARMOR, DESPITE PRESS REPORTS TO CONTRARY, AS THE TERRAIN IS UNSUITED TO USE OF TANKS. HE IS INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE SRV IS NOT TRYING TO PREVENT BOAT PEOPLE FROM LEAVING. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THAT IS NOT THIS EMBASSY'S VIEW. WE BELIEVE THAT ESCAPING FROM VIETNAM CONTINUES TO BE A HAZARDOUS
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UNDERTAKING.

2. I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED CAMBODIA WITH OBERG AS THIS IS A SENSITIVE POINT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE FUROR RAISED BY HIS INTERVIEW SOME WEEKS AGO.

3. IN THESE BRIEF CHATS WITH OBERG HE HAS REPEATEDLY SOUGHT

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TO GIVE IMPRESSION HE HAS UNUSUALLY RELIABLE SOURCES OF INFO
ON SITUATION IN VIETNAM, AND IMPLIED THAT THESE SOURCES ARE NOT
AVAILABLE TO OTHER MISSIONS IN VIETNAM. HE CERTAINLY IS WELL
WIRED IN TO VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS, WITH WHOM HE SYMPATHIZES TO
MARKED DEGREE. SOME OF HIS STATEMENTS ARE CLEARLY EXAGGERATED,
AND OTHERS ARE MANIFESTLY UNTRUE. THE POINT ABOUT SINO-VIETNAMESE
RELATIONS HAVING PASSED POINT OF NO RETURN SURELY IS GROSSLY
EXAGGERATED. THE POINT ABOUT ARMOR BEING UNUSUABLE ON SINO-
VIETNAMESE BORDER IS NOT TRUE. FRENCH USED ARMOR EXTENSIVELY IN
1950 IN CAMPAIGN FOR CONTROL OF BORDER TOWNS ON ROADS LEADING
I TO CHINA.

4. IN SUM, AMBASSADOR OBERG IS ALWAYS WORTH TALING TO,
BUT HE AT TIMES MAKES STATEMENTS THAT ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO
TAKE SERIOUSLY.
WHITEHOUSE

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